

# STARBLAZER

SPACE FICTION ADVENTURE IN PICTURES No. 69

16p



## NIGHTMARE PLANET



# STARBLAZER



VOLKANITE — THE PRODUCT OF PRIMEVAL VOLCANIC FORCES, AND A VITAL FUEL FOR THE VAST ENERGY CONSUMING SPACECRAFT OF THE TERRAN FORMATION. VOLKANITE WAS FOUND ONLY ON PLANETS IN A PRIMITIVE STAGE OF EVOLUTION FAR OUT IN THE EERIE SILENCE OF UNCHARTED SPACE. THE MEN WHO COLLECTED THIS FUEL WERE HARD LIVING MEN WHO PLAYED FOR HIGH STAKES. THE STAKES WERE HIGHEST — LIFE — ON THE NIGHTMARE PLANET.



THE ONLY RULE WAS FIRST COME FIRST SERVED. AS THE VOLCANOES BELCHED THEIR  
MOLTEN INNARDS SKYWARDS, A HUNDRED SENSORS SCANNED THE FOUNTAINS OF DEATH  
FOR TRACES OF THE MOLTEN VOLKANITE.



4  
'HAWK' HAWKINS AND HIS PARTNER, SILVA, HAD BEEN WEEKS HUNTING THE VOLKANITE.

I'M BEGINNING TO THINK THIS  
PLANET'S PLAYED OUT, SILVA.

COULD BE! THE PICKINGS ARE  
GETTING SMALLER ALL THE TIME.




HOLD IT! THERE'S A  
JET ON RED ZERO FIVE!

GOT IT! ENERGY NET ACTIVATED!  
GUN CREWS READY FOR BLASTING  
THROUGH TO OUR PAY PACKET!






5  
BEFORE ANY OF THE RIVAL SHIPS COULD TURN, HAWK WAS THUNDERING ACROSS THE PLANET.



WE'VE ONLY GOT FIFTEEN SECONDS  
SO LET'S MAKE THIS A GOOD  
RUN!

JUST GET US THERE FIRST  
AND WE'LL DO THE REST!



ALL SHIPS STAY CLEAR.  
I HAVE FIRST CLAIM HERE!

YOU CAN CLAIM IT WHEN YOU'VE  
GOT IT, HAWKINS, AND YOU  
HAVEN'T GOT IT YET!



AS HAWK HURTTLED AT THE VOLCANO HIS CREW FIRED THEIR DEFLECTOR GUNS PUSHING THE ERUPTING LAVA ASIDE TO EXPOSE THE THIN JET OF VOLKANITE.

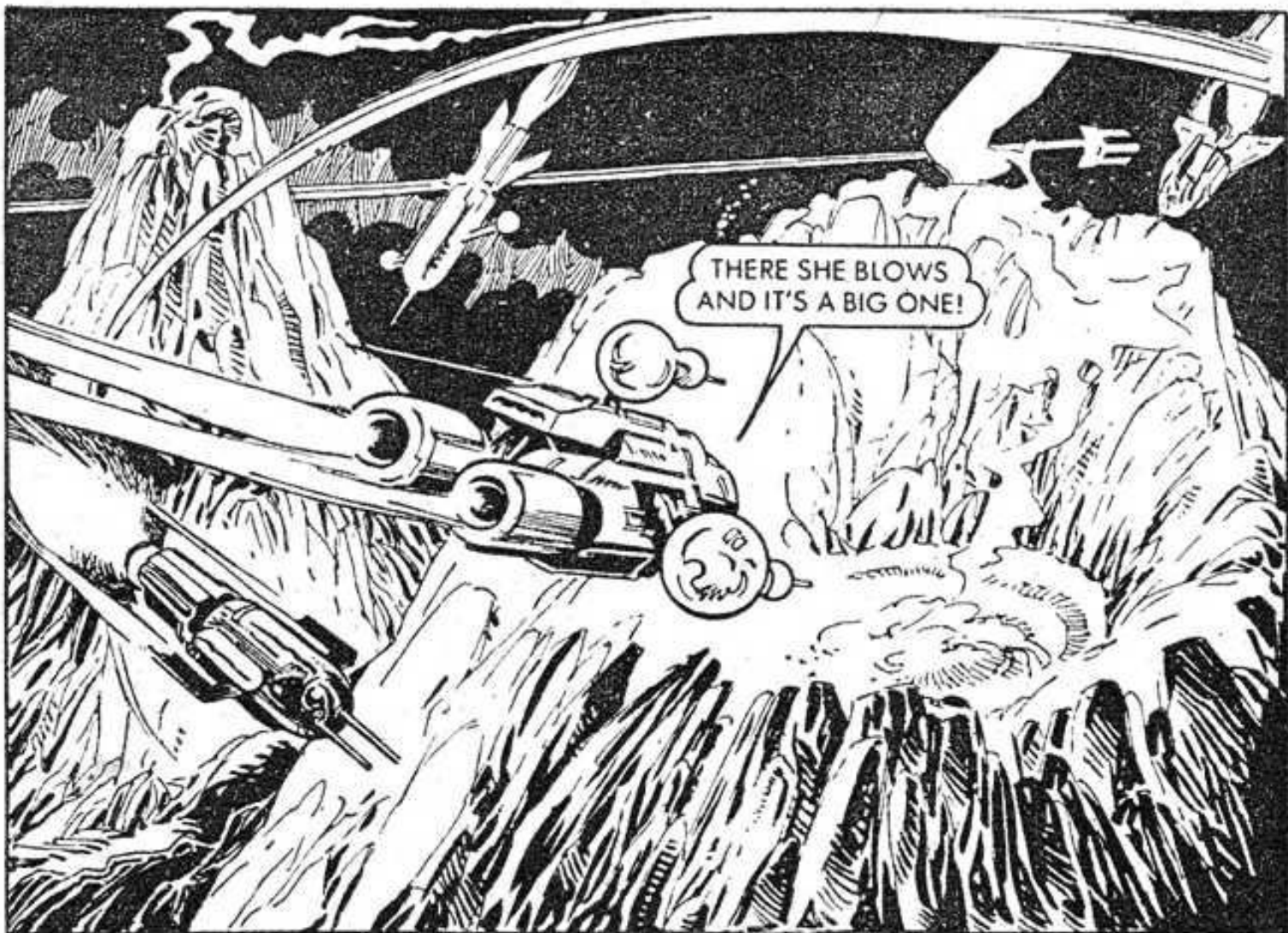




COME ROUND FOR ANOTHER RUN. I THINK SHE'S  
GOING TO BLOW SOME MORE VOLKANITE.



THERE SHE BLOWS  
AND IT'S A BIG ONE!







SUPERB REFLEXES AND BRUTE STRENGTH STEERED THE CRIPPLED STARSHIP TO SAFETY.

THE POWER UNITS ARE INTACT.  
C'MON, YOU TIN CRATE—GET UP THERE.



YOU MURDERING SLOB, BRAKKO.  
YOU DID THAT DELIBERATELY.  
YOU'VE KILLED TEN OF MY CREW!



IT WAS AN ACCIDENT AND YOU  
CAN'T PROVE OTHERWISE!

I'LL GET YOU FOR THIS. I'LL SEE YOU  
ROTTING IN A FEDERATION PRISON.



IT'S A TOUGH BUSINESS, HAWKINS, IF  
YOU DON'T LIKE THE HEAT—STAY OUT  
OF THE FIRE!



WE'D BETTER MAKE FOR ARCOS AND GET REPAIRED. THE VOLKANITE WE'VE ALREADY GOT SHOULD JUST ABOUT PAY FOR IT.

GETTING A REPLACEMENT CREW'S GOING TO BE THE HARD BIT.



THEY BEGAN THE LONG WARP BACK TO THE FRONTIER PLANET, ARCOS.



ONE THIRD SPEED ONLY, SILVA, WE'VE SUFFERED TOO MUCH DAMAGE FOR MAXIMUM WARP.

SUDDENLY THERE WAS A TREMENDOUS CRASH AND THE SPACERS WERE HURLED TO THE FLOOR.



WE'VE COLLIDED WITH SOMETHING,  
CAPTAIN. THE DEFLECTOR SHIELDS ARE  
DEFECTIVE.

GET VAC-SUITS! SILVA AND  
I ARE GOING SPACESIDE!





ONCE OUTSIDE—

LOOKS LIKE PART  
OF AN OLD MINING SHIP.

IT'S THE CONTROL CONSOLE. LET'S  
GET ABOARD AND FIND OUT WHAT IT IS.



NO SURVIVORS FROM THIS. IT'S BEEN  
WRECKED FOR A FEW YEARS I'D SAY.

I'LL TAKE THE NAVIGATION LOG—THAT  
SHOULD TELL US WHAT HAPPENED AND  
WHO IT IS.



THE NAVLOG WAS PUT IN A REPLAY MACHINE.

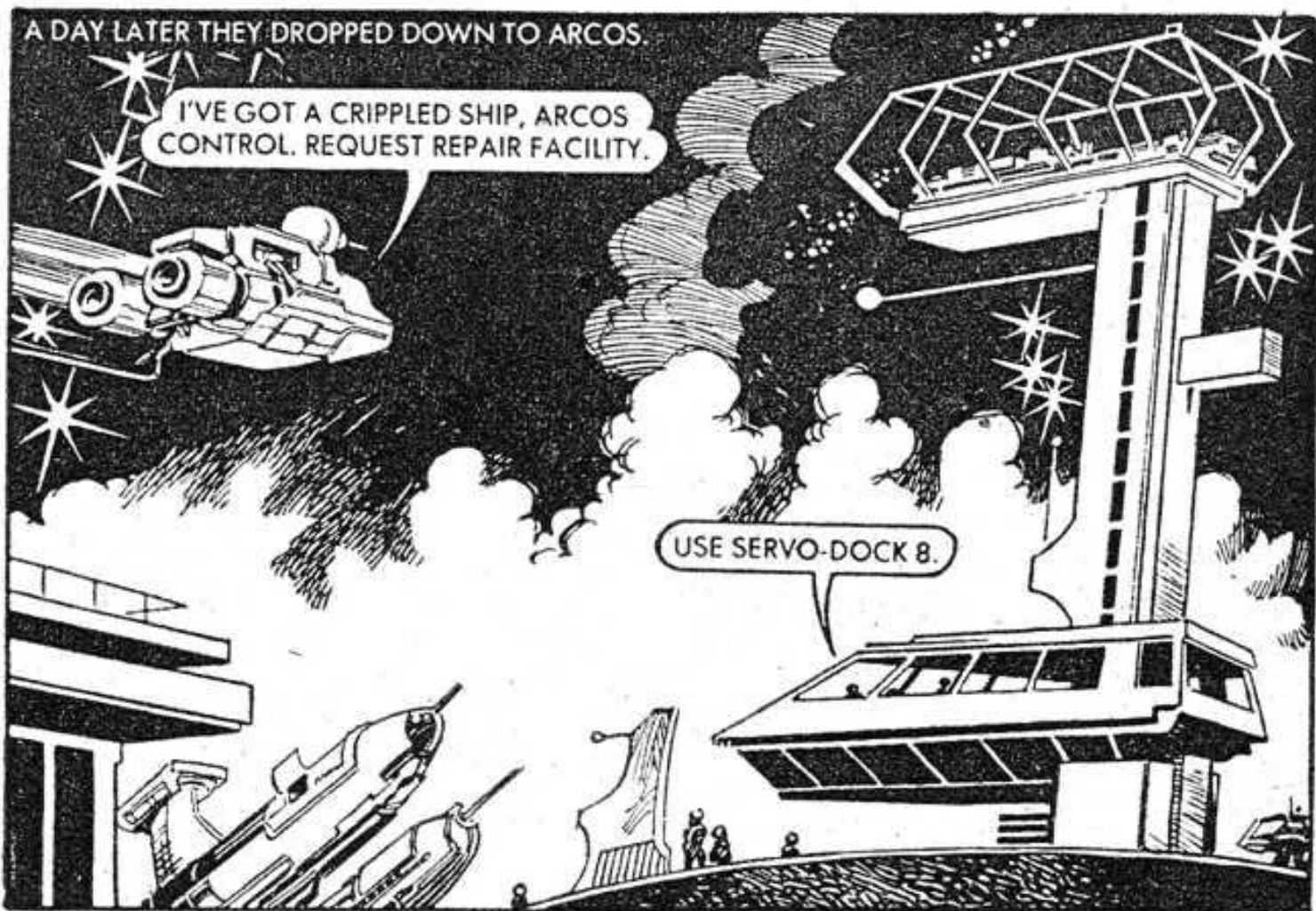
HELL'S FANGS! THAT SHIP WAS THE  
'DORADO'—IT BELONGED TO KYCHEK  
JONES!

HE FOUND THE RICHEST EVER SOURCE  
OF VOLKANITE THEN DISAPPEARED  
YEARS BACK, TAKING THE SECRET OF  
IT WITH HIM.

HE HAD AN ACCIDENT DURING HYPER-WARP, HIS  
CARGO OF VOLKANITE DESTABILISED AND TOOK  
MOST OF THE SHIP WITH IT IN ONE BIG BANG.

BUT THIS NAV LOG'S GOT ALL THE DATA ON HOW TO  
FIND HIS MINES—SPACE CO-ORDINATES, WARP TIMES,  
IT'S THE KEY TO THE GREATEST FORTUNE IN THE  
GALAXY.







THEY RECKON IT'LL TAKE ABOUT A WEEK TO REPAIR  
AND THAT'S HOW LONG WE'VE GOT TO FIND A  
REPLACEMENT CREW.



LEAVE THAT TO ME, SIR. I  
KNOW JUST THE MEN WE NEED.

I WANT RELIABLE MEN, SLIGE. NONE  
OF THE SPACE SCUM THAT HAUNT THIS PLACE.



AT LAST ALL WAS READY AND HAWK WENT ON A TOUR OF INSPECTION.

SILVA! COME AND  
LOOK AT THIS!



SOMEONE'S BEEN GIVING THE  
PLACE A THOROUGH GOING  
OVER. I BET THEY'VE BEEN  
LOOKING FOR THE NAV LOG.

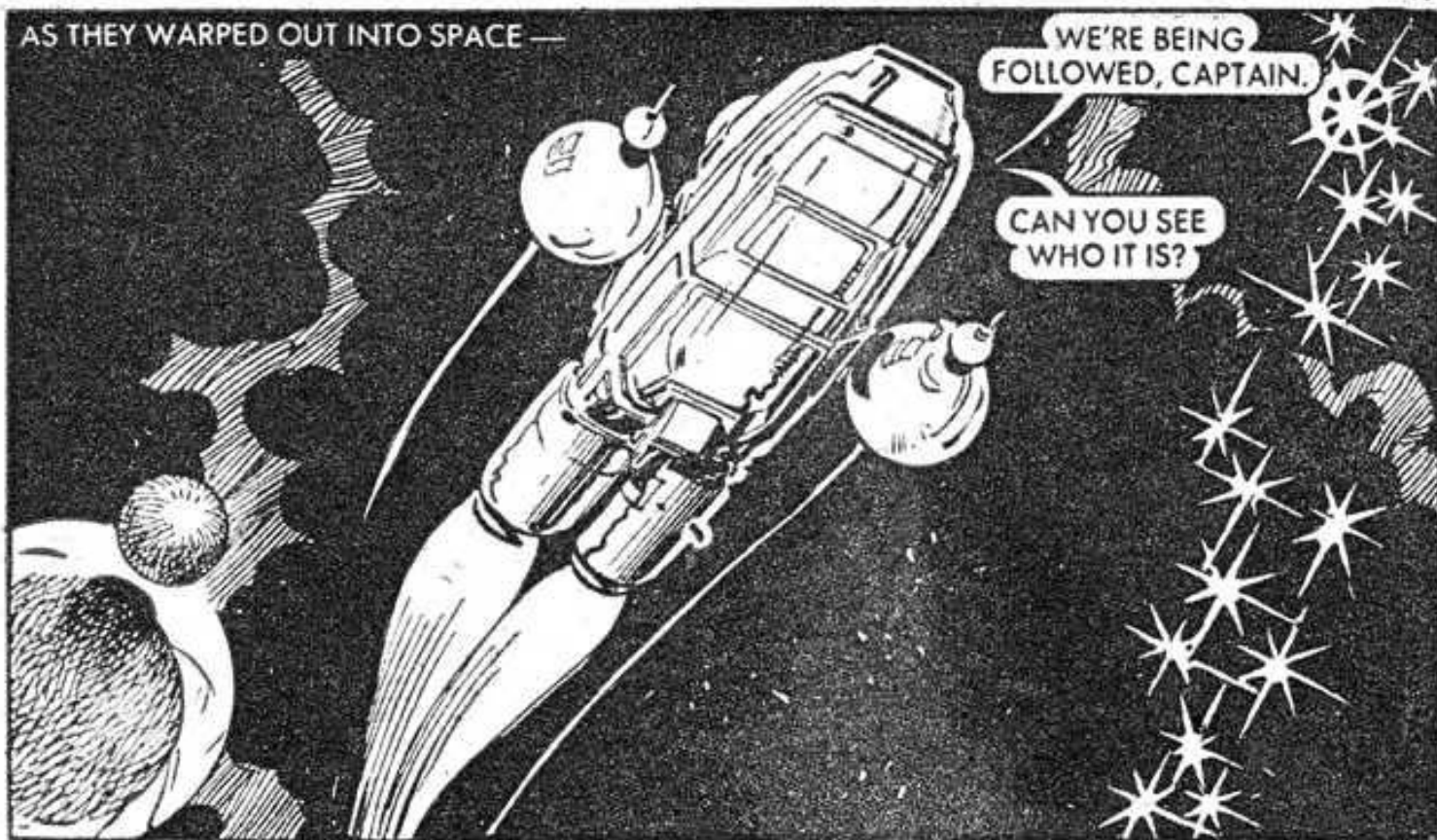
THEN THEY KNOW ABOUT  
THE VOLKANITE!



AS THEY WARPED OUT INTO SPACE —

WE'RE BEING  
FOLLOWED, CAPTAIN.

CAN YOU SEE  
WHO IT IS?



IT'S BRAKKO! HE MUST HAVE  
RETURNED TO SELL HIS PICKINGS  
WHILE WE WERE UNDER REPAIR.

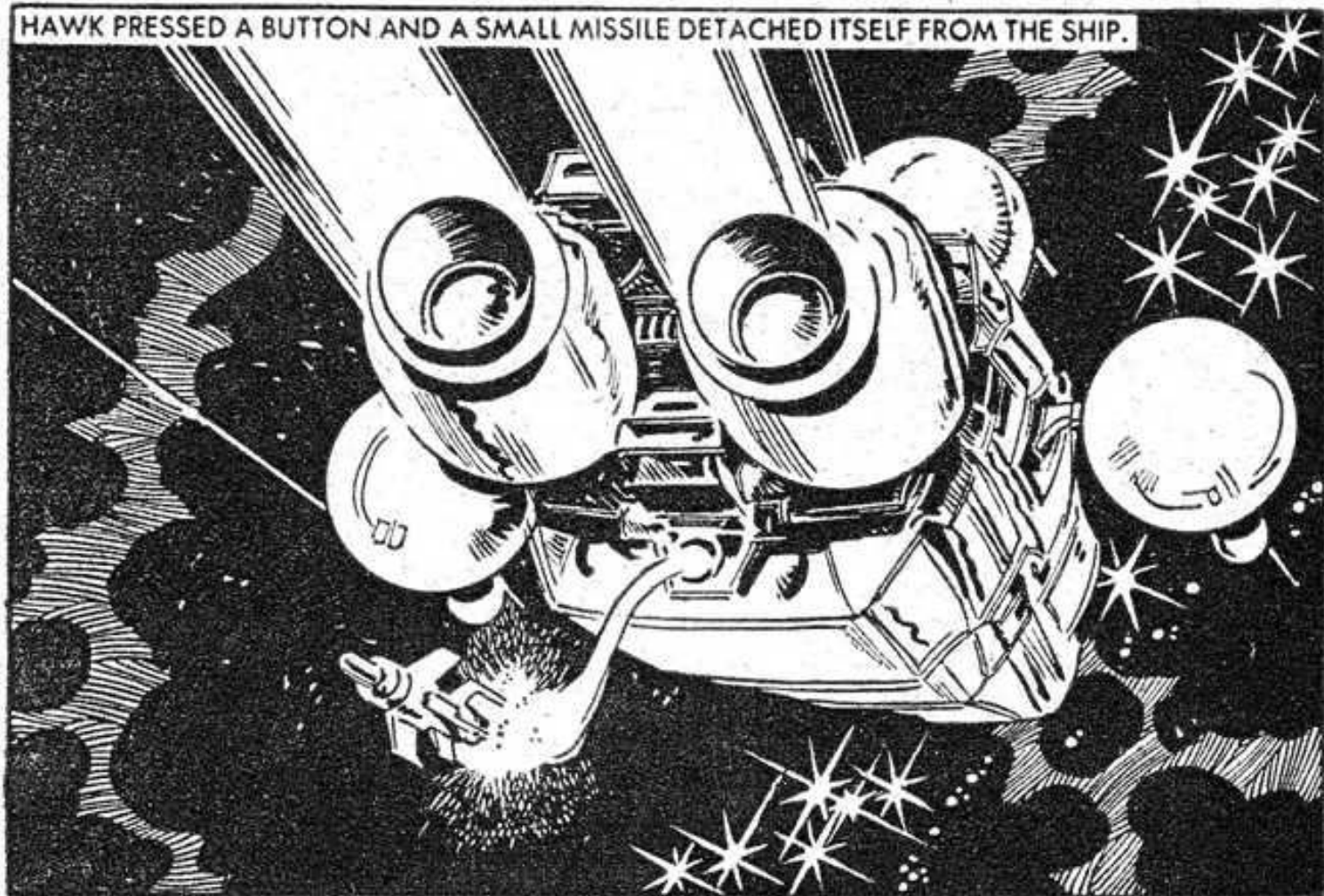
HE'S DEFINITELY TRAILING US.  
I WONDER WHO TIPPED HIM OFF?







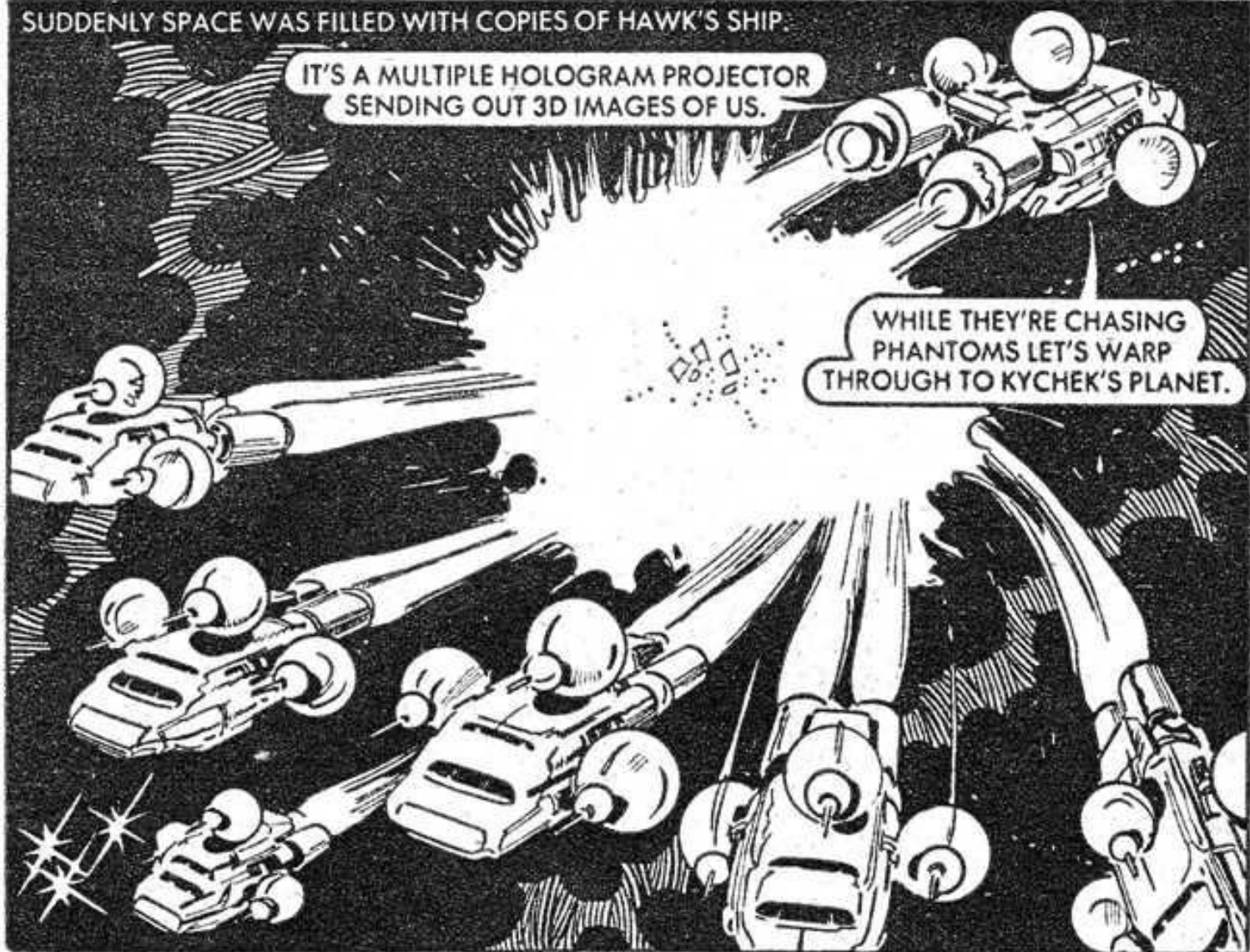
HAWK PRESSED A BUTTON AND A SMALL MISSILE DETACHED ITSELF FROM THE SHIP.



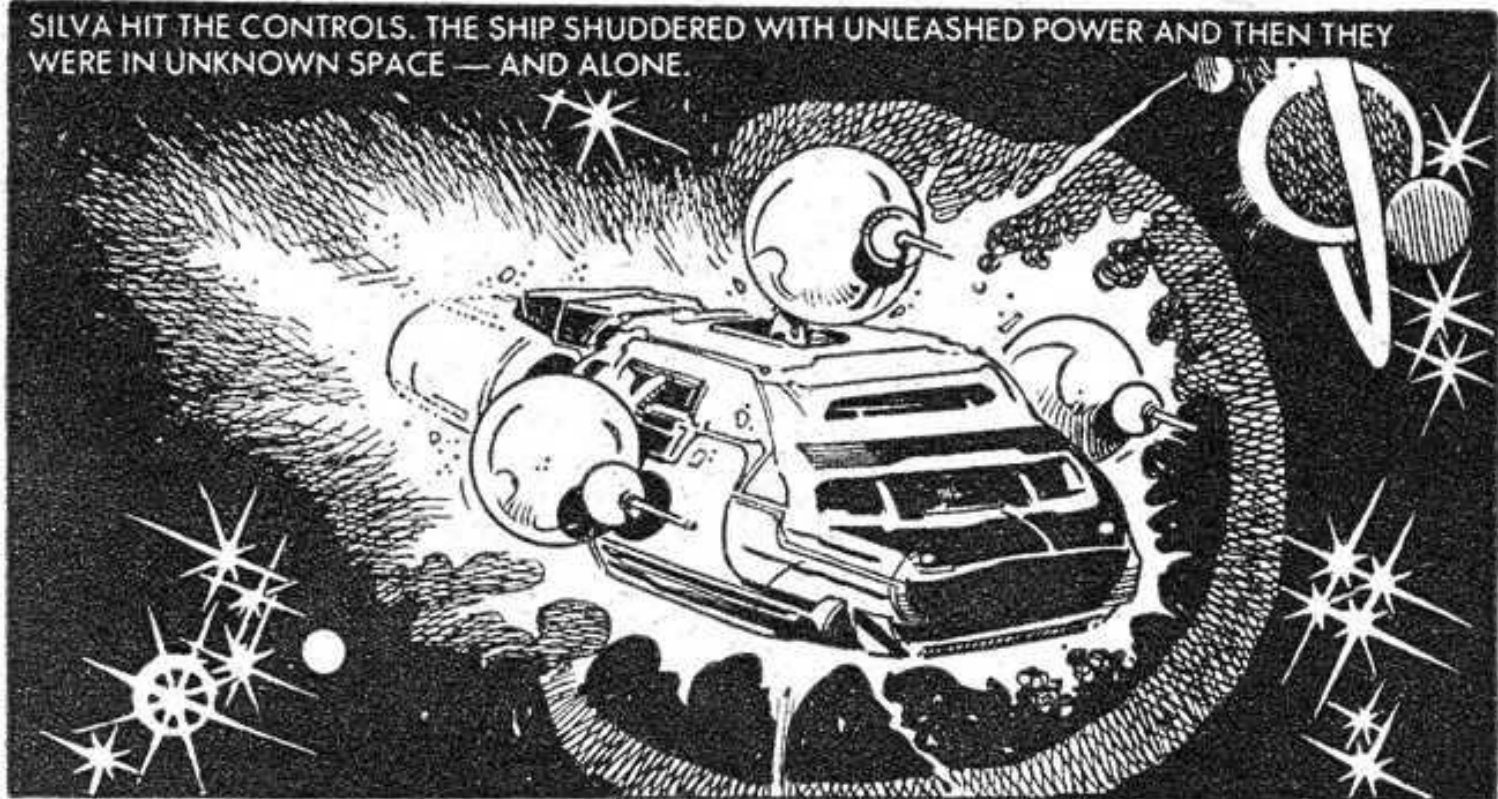
SUDDENLY SPACE WAS FILLED WITH COPIES OF HAWK'S SHIP.

IT'S A MULTIPLE HOLOGRAM PROJECTOR  
SENDING OUT 3D IMAGES OF US.

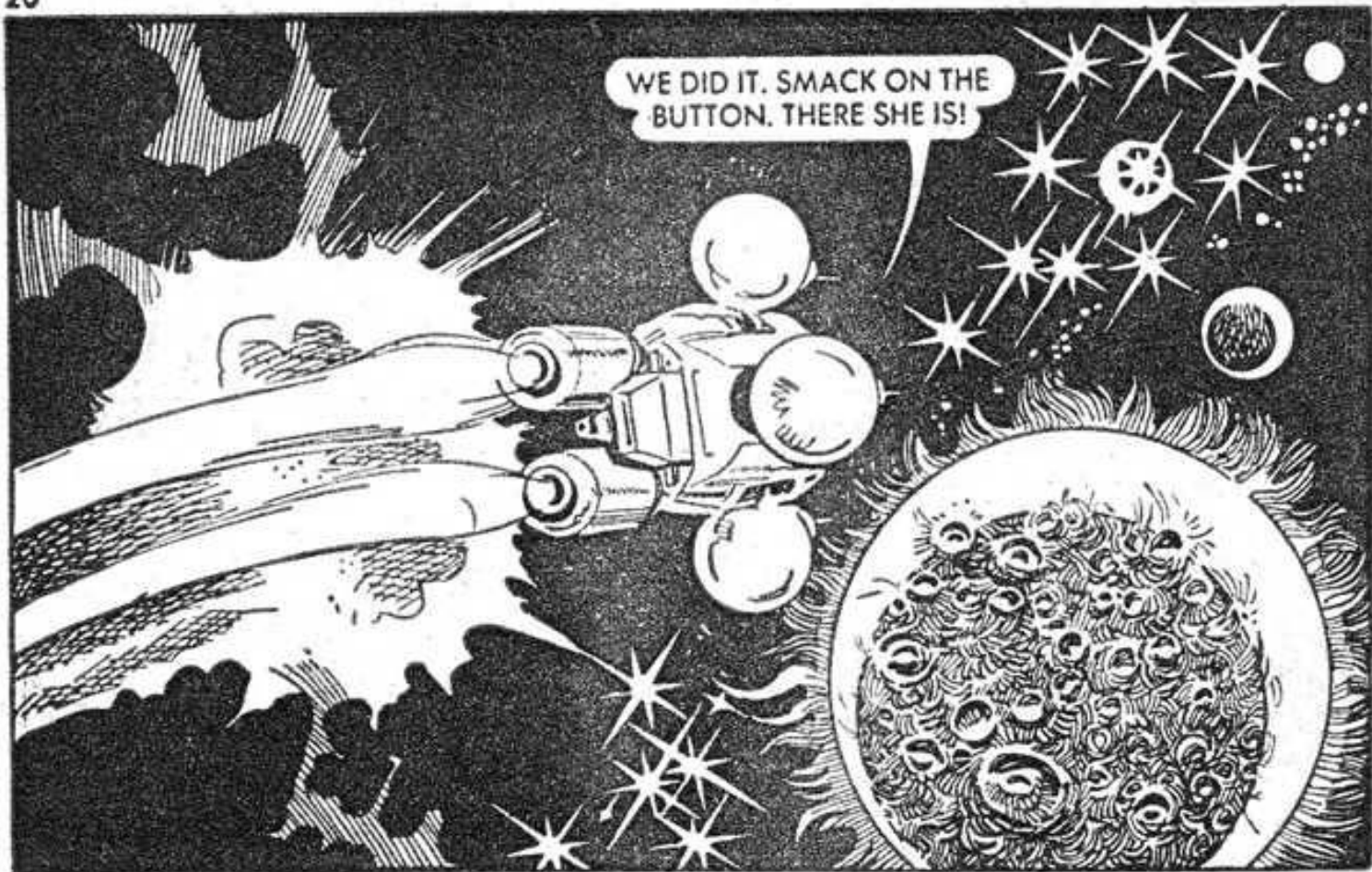
WHILE THEY'RE CHASING  
PHANTOMS LET'S WARP  
THROUGH TO KYCHEK'S PLANET.



SILVA HIT THE CONTROLS. THE SHIP SHUDDERED WITH UNLEASHED POWER AND THEN THEY  
WERE IN UNKNOWN SPACE — AND ALONE.










ONE RUN WAS ENOUGH TO FILL THE HOLD.











ANYTHING ELSE YOU'D LIKE TO  
KNOW BEFORE I VAPOURISE YOU?

I SUPPOSE BRAKKO SUPPLIED THE  
REPLACEMENT CREW AND PROMISED  
YOU ALL EQUAL SHARES IN THE  
FIND?



THEN THE ONLY THING  
I CAN DO IS THIS.

HAWK FLIPPED THE SWITCH AND THE NEXT SECOND  
THE CREW WERE FLOATING IN AIR AS THE GRAVITY  
FIELD COLLAPSED.



C'MON, SILVA.

I READ YOU.



THE TWO SPACERS KICKED HARD  
AGAINST A PANEL AND SHOT  
THROUGH THE AIR STRAIGHT AT THE  
STARTLED CREW.



TRY AND SMASH  
THROUGH TO THE DOOR.







THEY BLURRED THE STARS UNTIL AT LAST THEY SIGHTED THE EARTH-TYPE PLANET.

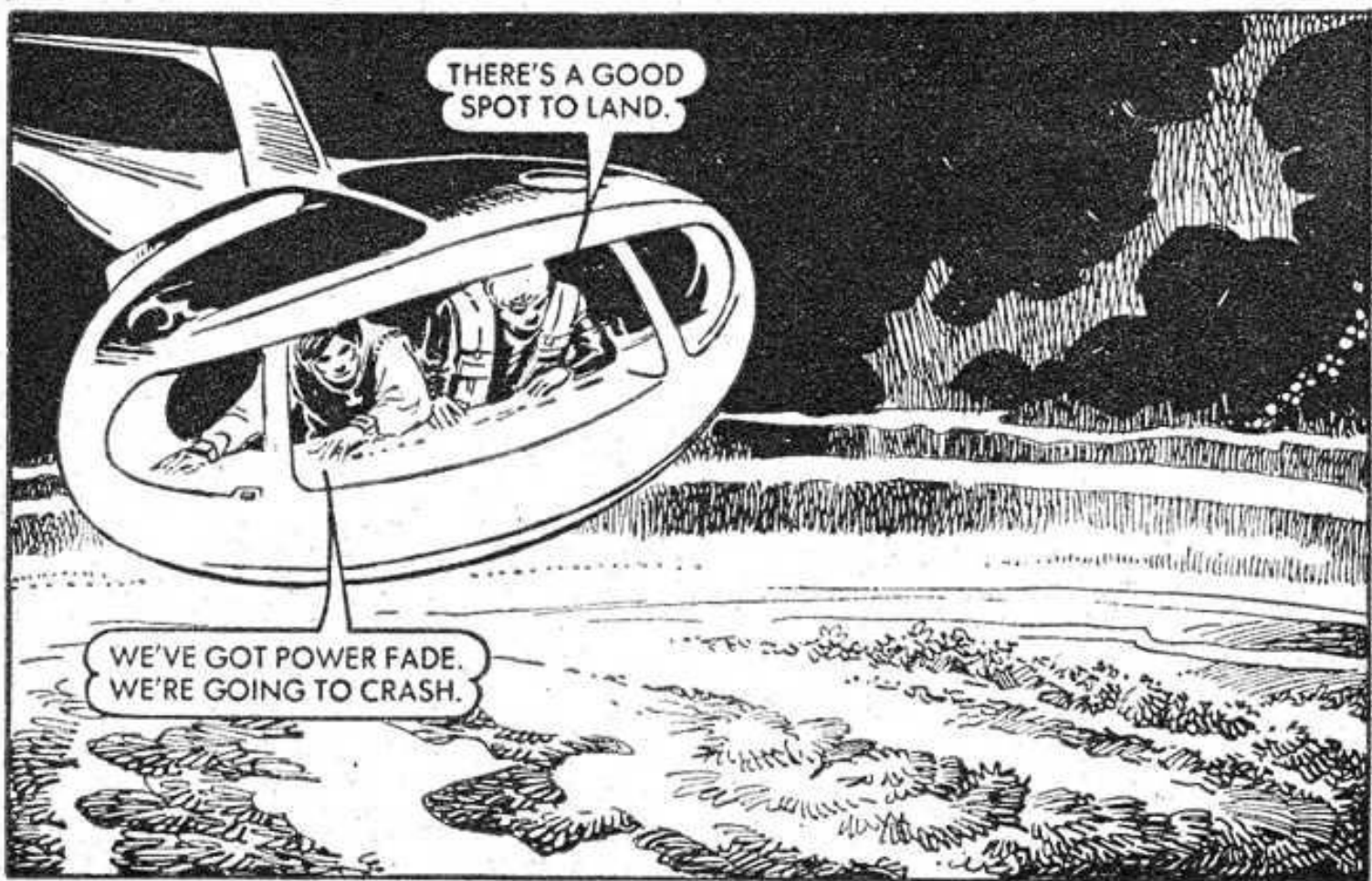
ACCORDING TO KYCHEK'S LOG IT'S IN  
PRIMORDIAL DEVELOPMENT STAGE AND  
UNINHABITED.

WE'VE GOT JUST ENOUGH POWER LEFT FOR A  
FIRST-TIME LANDING... SO MAKE IT A  
GOOD ONE.



THERE'S A GOOD  
SPOT TO LAND.

WE'VE GOT POWER FADE.  
WE'RE GOING TO CRASH.





HAWK HEAVED DESPERATELY AT THE CONTROLS BUT THE SMALL SHIP PLUMMETED  
SIDEWAYS CRASHING INTO A CLUMP OF SPONGY TRUNKS.



THE TRUNKS CUSHIONED THE FORCE OF THE CRASH  
LEAVING THEM BRUISED BUT INTACT.

THAT WAS SOME LANDING.

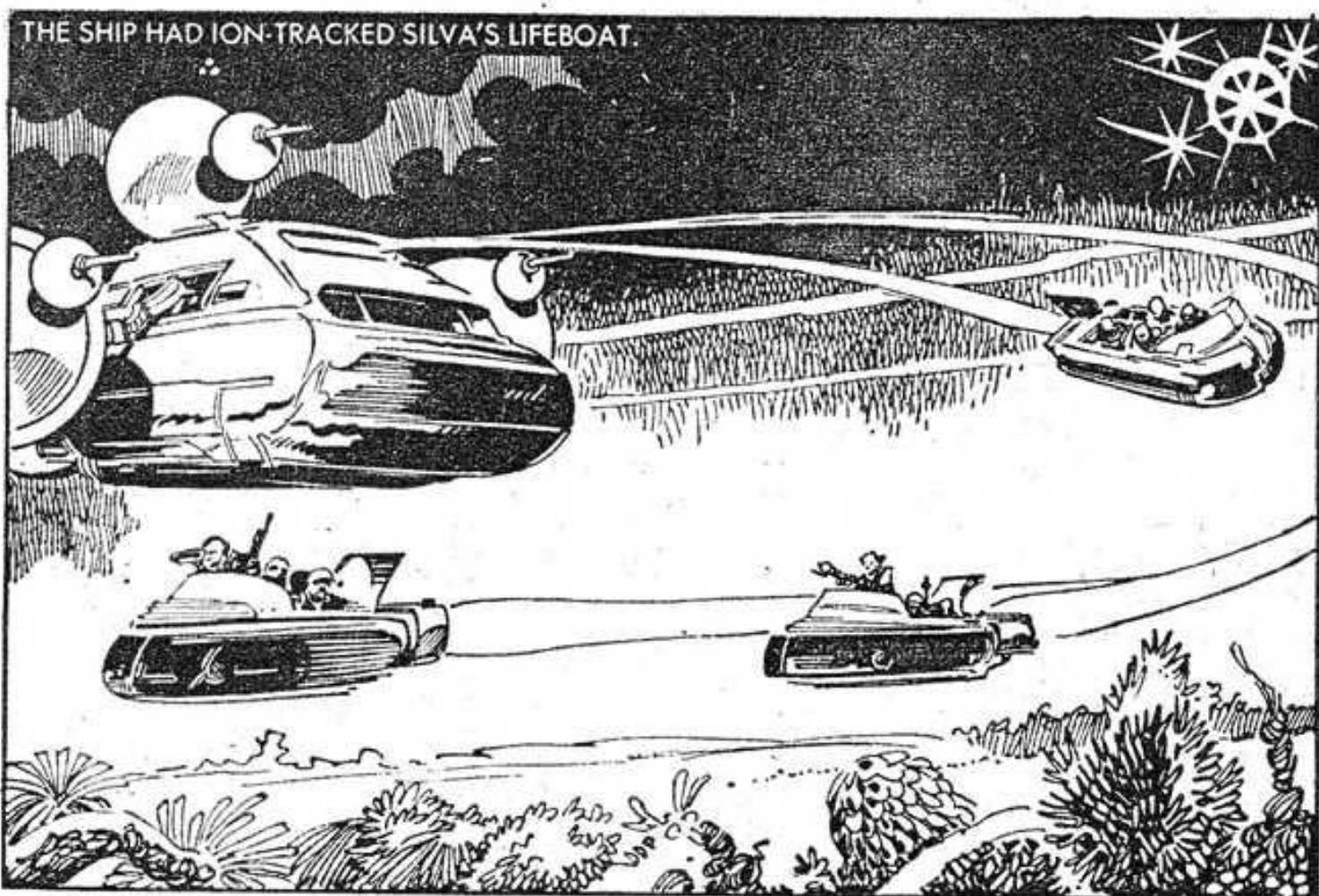


NO! DON'T TOUCH THE TRUNK.















I'VE GOT A FIX ON 'EM.  
THEY'VE STOPPED UP AHEAD.



WE'LL HAVE TO BACKTRACK.  
THERE'S NO WAY THROUGH THIS LOT.

TOO LATE, HAWK.  
WE'VE BEEN SPOTTED!







BEFORE CARLOZ COULD MOVE THE DRIVER WAS ENVELOPED IN AN EXPLOSION OF ELECTRICAL ENERGY.



THAT TREE ... IT ... IT  
ELECTROCUTED HIM!

AND LOOK WHAT IT'S  
DONE TO THE SCOOTER.





THE STRANGE PLANT EJECTED HARPOON-LIKE BARBS.

LOOK OUT!



HE'S BEING DRAGGED  
BACK TO THE PLANT.





THEY PRESSED ON UNTIL DARKNESS BEGAN TO FALL.

WE'RE NOT GOING TO GET BACK  
TO THE SHIP TONIGHT, CARLOZ.

WE'LL STOP HERE FOR THE NIGHT.  
TIE THEM TO THOSE TREES.

SLEEP WELL, HAWKINS.  
WAKE ME UP WHEN IT'S MORNING.

THIS GRASS IS REAL LUXURY. IT'S  
SOFTER THAN A GRAVITY MATTRESS!

WITH NIGHT CAME A TOTAL  
SILENCE, BROKEN ONLY BY THE  
EERIE NOISES OF PROWLING  
ANIMALS.

AS THE PALE, TRIPLE-SUNNED DAWN BROKE.

HAWK! WAKE UP! JUPE—LOOK AT THE GRASS!

WH-WHAT?

IT'S GROWN INTO THEIR BODIES AND SUCKED THEM DRY OF ALL THE FLUIDS.

VAMPIRE GRASS! IT MUST HAVE ANAESTHETISED THEM FIRST.







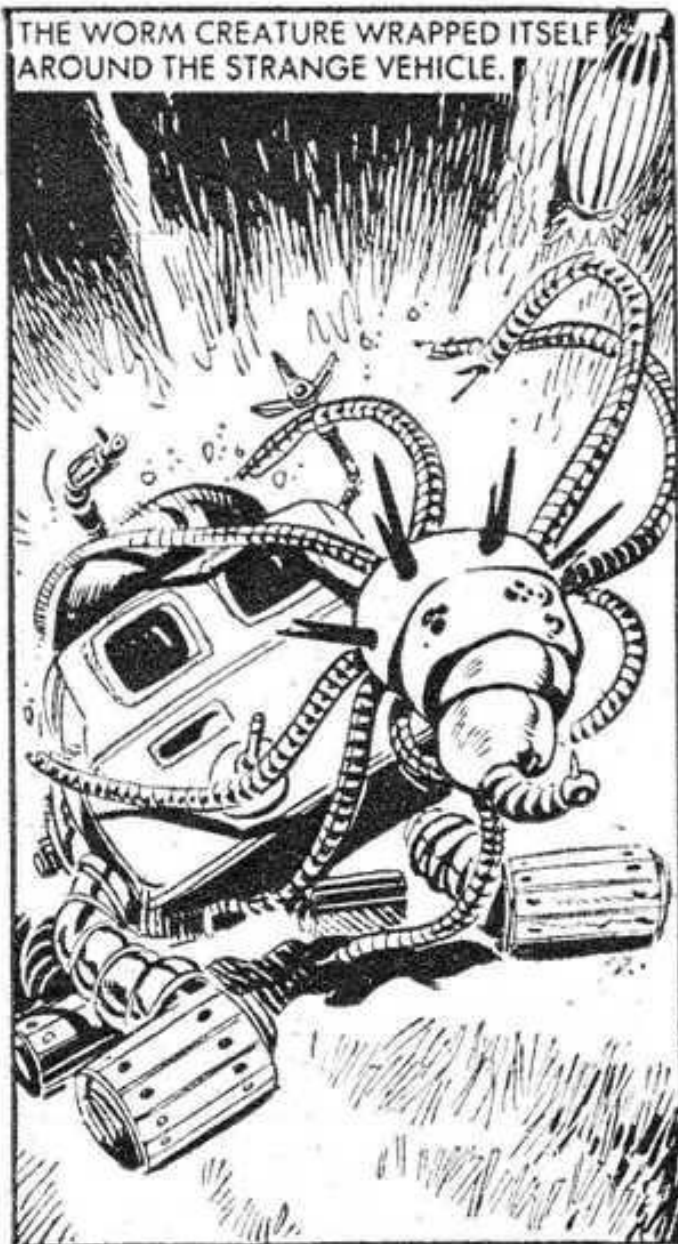
THE GREAT CARNIVOROUS WORM  
REARED OVER HAWK, ITS FEEDING  
TUBES EXTENDED ...





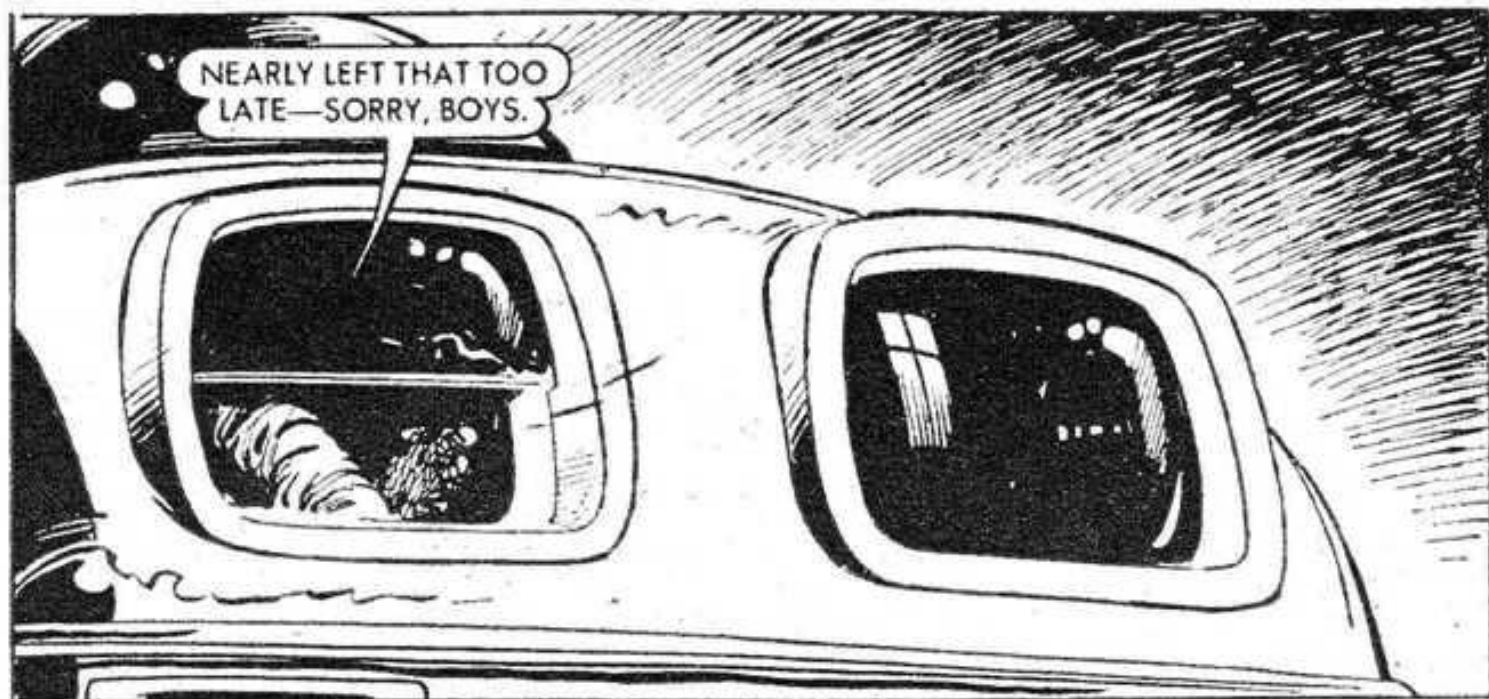


THE WORM CREATURE WRAPPED ITSELF  
AROUND THE STRANGE VEHICLE.



THE VEHICLE BLASTED THE CARNIVOROUS WORM.

NEARLY LEFT THAT TOO  
LATE—SORRY, BOYS.





AN OLD PROSPECTOR CLAMBERED OUT OF THE CRAFT.

THANKS FOR THE RESCUE.  
BUT WHERE DID YOU COME FROM?

THE PLACE WAS ALL MINE UNTIL MY  
THORBAT FRIEND HERE SAW YOU  
ARRIVE. HE CAME AND TOLD ME.

THORBAT?

THORBAT IS MY "PET!" BY THE WAY  
MY NAME'S GUNNAR. I'M ALL THAT'S  
LEFT OF KYCHEK JONES' BASE CAMP  
CREW.

KYCHEK JONES HAS  
A BASE HERE?

YES! HE USED IT AS A STORAGE DEPOT. THEN HE FAILED TO COME BACK FOR US AND WE HAD NO WAY OF LEAVING THE PLANET. SINCE THEN ALL THE OTHERS HAVE DIED. WE'LL HAVE TO GET MOVING. THORBAT SAYS THERE'S A SWARM OF TUBEHEADS COMING THIS WAY. AND I'M CLEAN OUT OF FIREPOWER, NOW!



THEY FOUND THEIR EXIT BARRED BY A GREAT SWARM OF THE WORM CREATURES.

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO  
RAM THEM. HOLD ON TIGHT!





GUNNAR THREW THE LAND MOBILE INTO TOP POWER AND CRUSHED INTO THE SWARM SMASHING AND RIPPING A PATH TO SAFETY.



HAWK EXPLAINED THEIR PLIGHT TO GUNNAR.

WITH YOUR HELP AND WEAPONS FROM YOUR DEPOT WE COULD GET MY SHIP BACK AND GET OUT OF THIS NIGHTMARE.

I'M WITH YOU, BUT THERE'S A PROBLEM GETTING AT OUR WEAPONS AND STORES. I'LL EXPLAIN WHEN WE GET THERE.



SOME HOURS LATER...

THE DEPOT'S ON TOP OF THERE.

THAT'S QUITE A CLIMB.

NO PROBLEM FOR THIS BABY, IT'S  
GOT VACUGRIP TREADS—THEY CAN  
DRIVE UP VERTICAL ROCK!

AS THE VEHICLE CLIMBED  
THE ROCKFACE—

WE'RE IN BIG TROUBLE!

WHY? I CAN'T  
SEE ANYTHING.











THE CREATURES DEFENCE MECHANISMS CONCENTRATED ON AVOIDING THE PAIN.

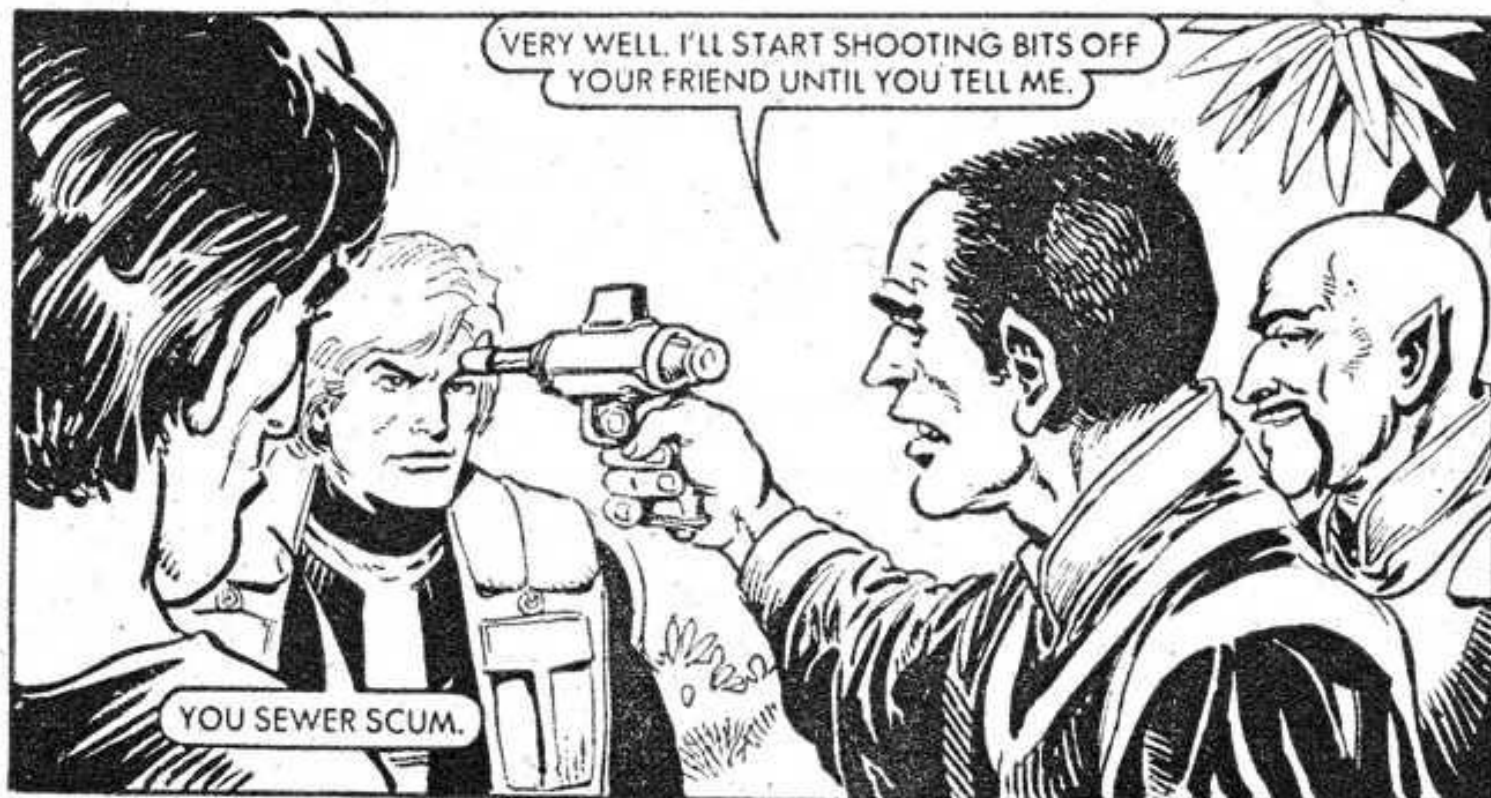






AS THE VEHICLE CLEARED THE TREES LASER FIRE LASHED OUT.









GUNNAR LED SLIGE TO A LINE OF CONTAINERS.

KYCHEK JONES USED THIS DEPOT TO PROCESS AND STORE VOLKANITE. THESE ARE ATOMIC COMPRESSORS. EACH CYLINDER CONTAINS TEN TIMES ITS VOLUME IN VOLKANITE—AND THEY MAGNETICALLY ATTACH TO A SPACESHIP'S HULL.



GET THOSE CONTAINERS LOADED AS FAST AS YOU CAN.





WHEN THE LOADING WAS COMPLETED—

ARE YOU GOING  
TO LET US GO?

UNFORTUNATELY YOUR FRIEND  
DIDN'T HAVE QUITE ENOUGH TO  
PAY FOR YOUR LIVES. SORRY,  
BOYS!

THERE'S SOMETHING  
ELSE, SLIGE.



AFTER KYCHEK JONES  
DISAPPEARED, WE  
FOUND THE GREATEST  
TREASURE OF ALL—IT'S  
IN THE STOREHOUSE.



LET'S GO SEE.



THEY RUSHED INTO THE DARKENED BUILDING ...



INSIDE THE BUILDING WAS A HIVE OF DEADLY PIRANHA WASPS—THEIR SOLE DESIRE TO FEED ON THE MEN!







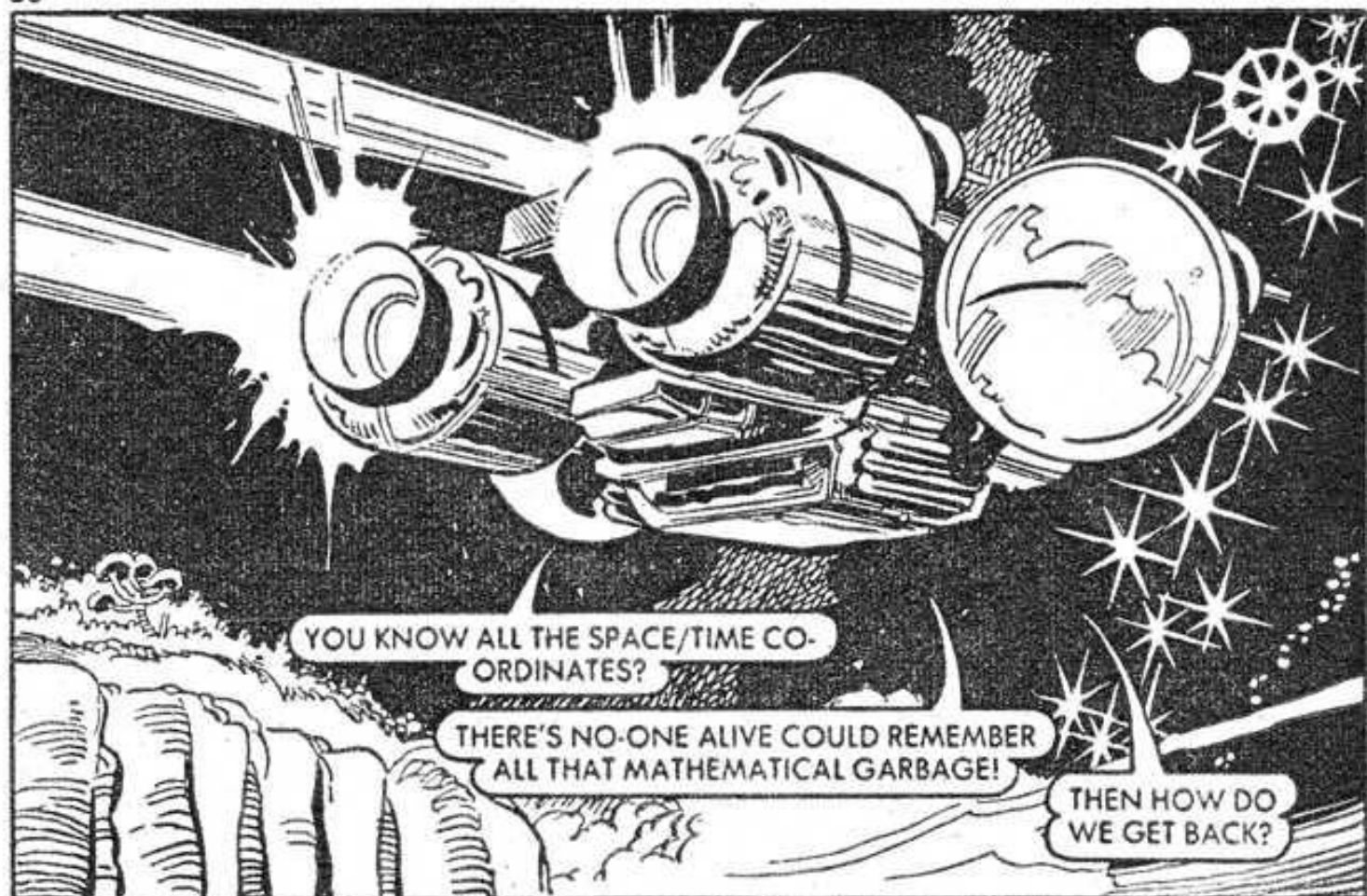
THE TRIO RACED TO THE SHIP—

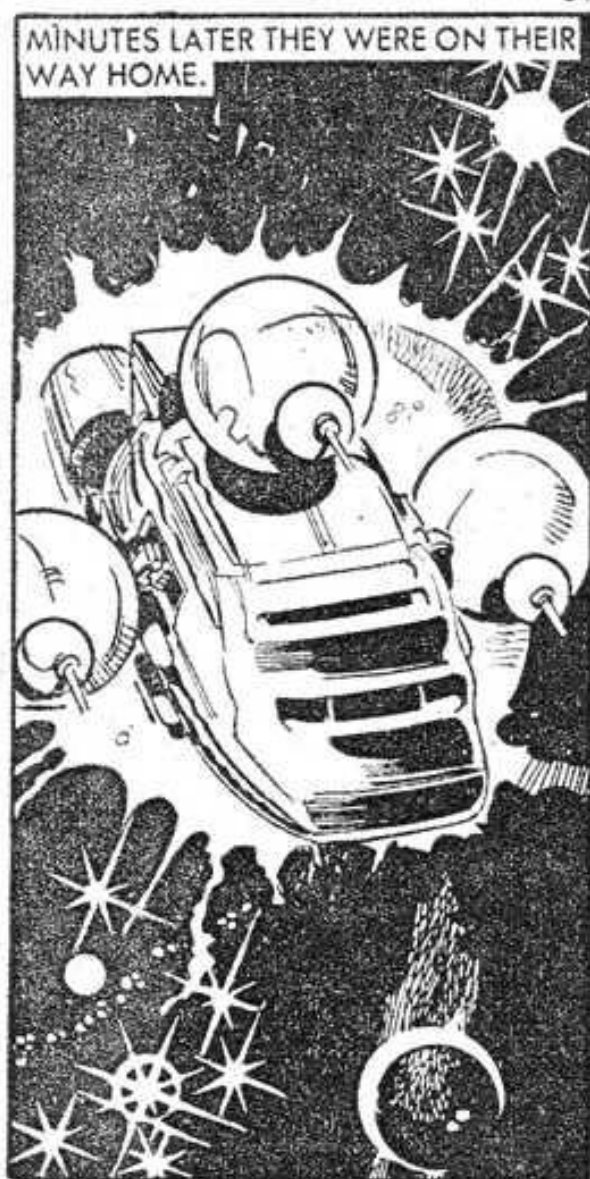


THE NAVIGATION LOG LAY IN SLIGE'S HAND AS THE CRAFT ROARED AWAY.



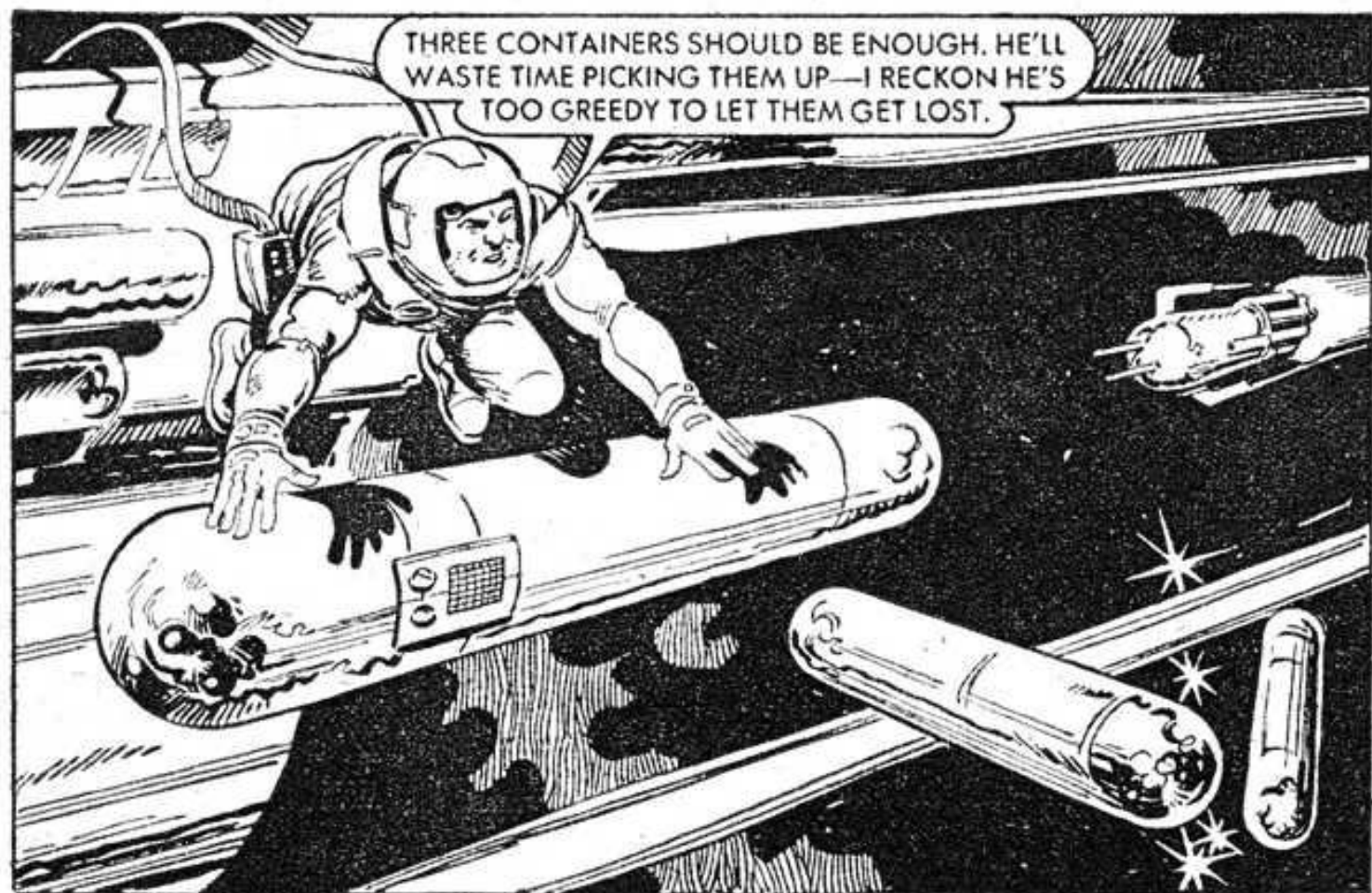
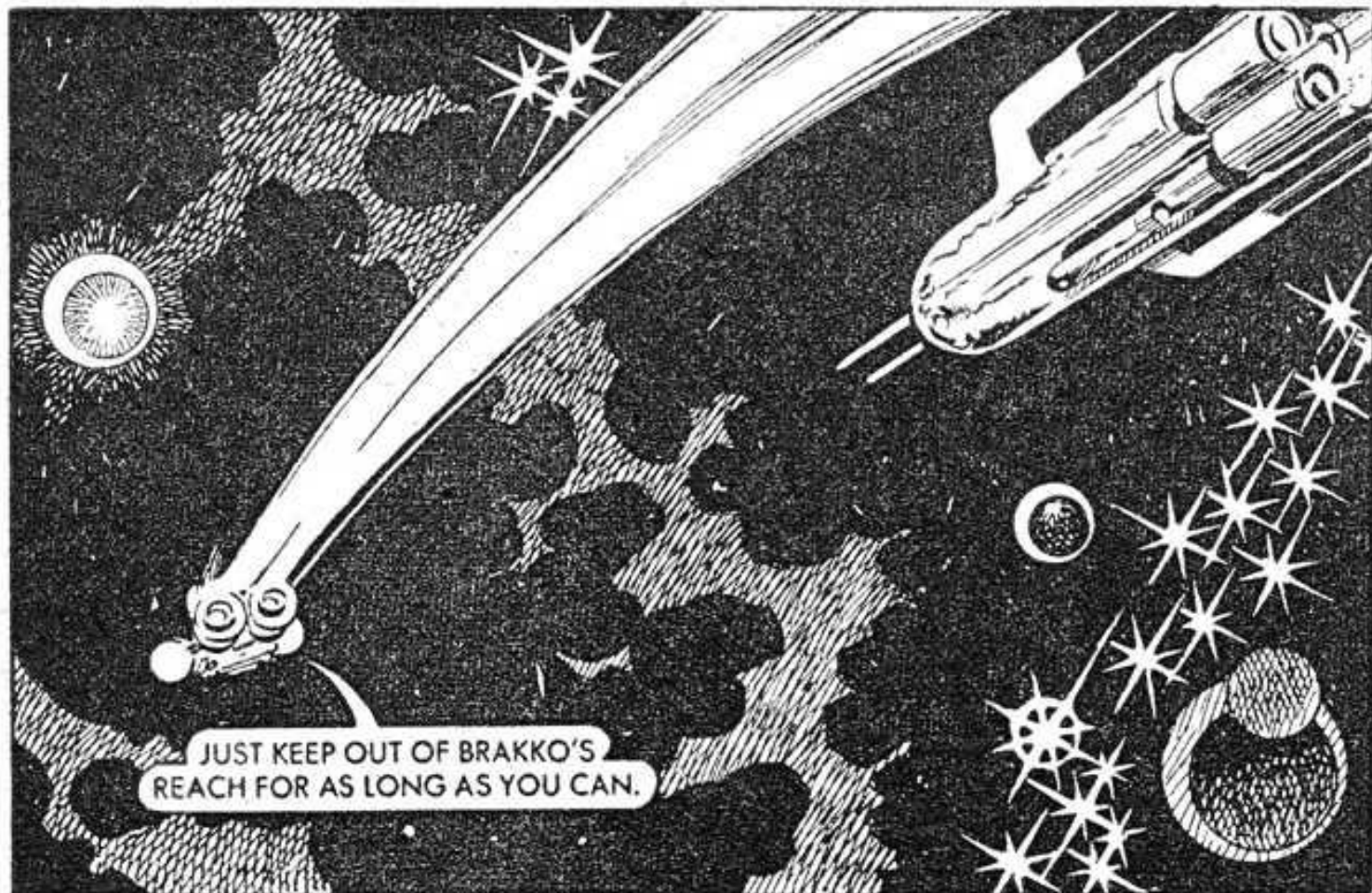














PICK THEM UP—WE'LL EASILY CATCH UP WITH THEM LATER.

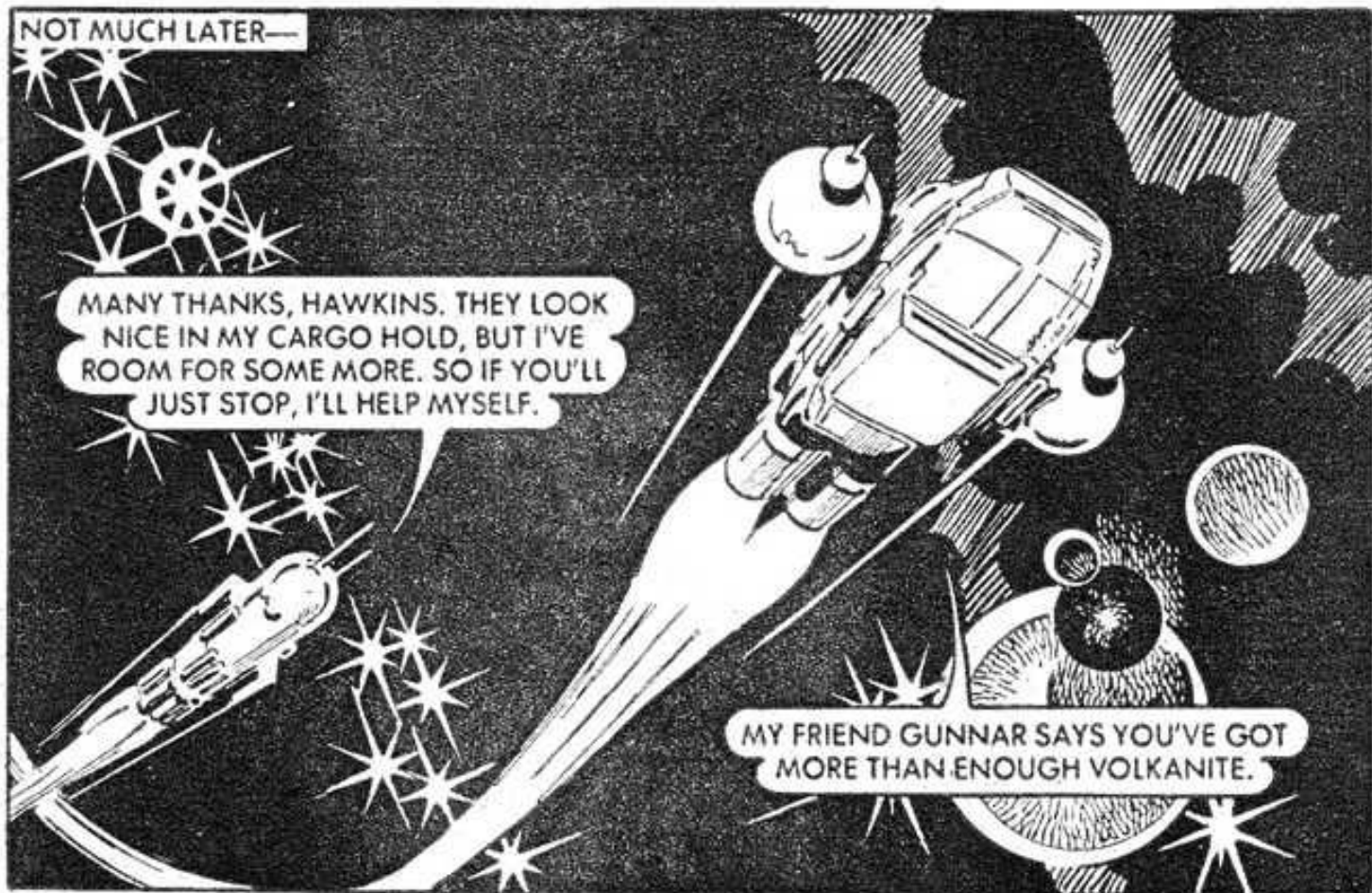
THEY'RE STUFFED FULL OF VOLKANITE.



NOT MUCH LATER—


MANY THANKS, HAWKINS. THEY LOOK NICE IN MY CARGO HOLD, BUT I'VE ROOM FOR SOME MORE. SO IF YOU'LL JUST STOP, I'LL HELP MYSELF.

MY FRIEND GUNNAR SAYS YOU'VE GOT MORE THAN ENOUGH VOLKANITE.



BRAKKO'S SHIP SUDDENLY SPLIT DOWN A HUNDRED SEAMS. ENGINES CRACKED AND FUEL BANKS SPEWED THEIR POWER INTO SPACE.

WHAT THE...??




JUST WHAT DID YOU DO?



REMEMBER I TOLD YOU THOSE CONTAINERS WERE ATOMIC COMPRESSORS? WELL, I SET THE COMPRESSOR FIELDS TO SWITCH OFF. RESULT—THREE CONTAINERS SUDDENLY BECAME THE SIZE OF THIRTY IN A SHIP THAT CAN ONLY HOLD TEN!

YOU'VE WRECKED OUR ENGINES. WE CAN'T MOVE. HELP US, HAWKINS.



YOUR LIFE SUPPORT SYSTEMS ARE INTACT ... YOU'LL SURVIVE. GOODBYE, BRAKKO.



WE'LL SEND A FEDERATION POLICE  
PATROL TO PICK YOU UP—SOMETIME.



THE THREE MEN SETTLED DOWN TO THEIR LONG JOURNEY BACK TO EARTH, AND A REST  
FROM THE DANGERS OF THE UNKNOWN ON A NIGHTMARE PLANET.

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**DON'T MISS THIS MONTH'S  
OTHER ACTION-PACKED  
ADVENTURE**



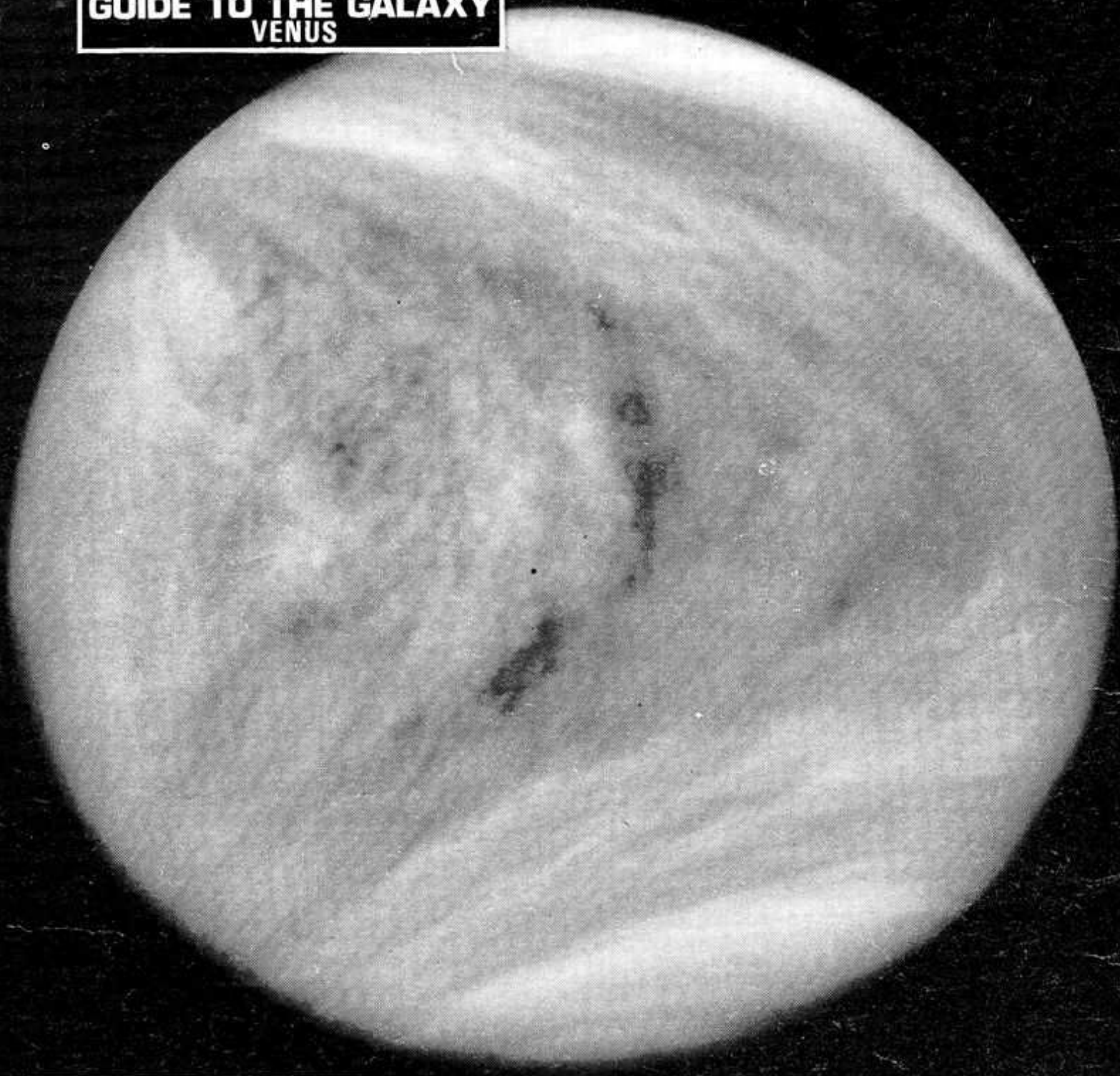
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# STARBLAZER'S

## GUIDE TO THE GALAXY

### VENUS



**VENUS**, next to the Moon is the brightest natural object in Earth's sky and is similar in size to Earth with a diameter of 7700 miles. Venera 1 flew past Earth's nearest planetary neighbour in early 1961, and since then has been the subject of many US and Russian probes. This photo, from a distance of 40,000 miles, was taken by the Pioneer Venus Orbiter in February 1979.